

CAN I REFUSE LIFE SUSTAINING MEDICAL TREATMENT?

What is an Advance Decision?



ADVANCE DECISIONS

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Previously known as 'Living Wills' or 'Advance Directives'.

An Advance Decision allows you to put in writing your wishes in relation to life-sustaining treatment in specific circumstances. A valid Advance Decision will be a direct instruction to any medical team responsible for your treatment and they are bound to abide by it.

Are they legally binding?

Since 1st October 2007 Advance Decisions can be legally binding and used to inform medical practitioners of your wishes about life-sustaining treatment should the circumstances arise.

Advance Decisions are only valid for the cessation of life-sustaining treatment, they are not instructions in relation to assisted dying.

What if I lose capacity?

A valid Advance Decision means that Doctors are aware of your wishes, even if you lose mental capacity.

It means that you have already made the decision and family members do not have to make decisions on your behalf in a distressing situation.

When should I make an Advance Decision?

An Advance Decision can be made at any time but it must relate to a specific set of circumstances. It must be drafted very carefully to ensure that it is both valid and applicable in a particular situation.

What if I would like a Lasting Power of Attorney for Health and Welfare?

A Lasting Power of Attorney for Health & Welfare deals with the day to day aspects of your care. Your appointed attorneys can make decisions about your care and treatment when you have lost the mental capacity to do so for yourself (see Factsheet on Lasting Powers of Attorney – Health and Welfare).

As long as you have not opted for your attorneys to make a decision on life sustaining treatment; an Advance Directive can be made alongside the Lasting Power of Attorney.

The two together can offer you as much control as possible about what happens to you should you require such medical intervention.

Can I ask for specific treatment to be given?

An Advance Decision does not allow you to request certain treatment. It is only for life-sustaining treatment to be withdrawn.

An Advance Statement can be used to convey your wishes in relation to any general medical treatment or care you may require in the future. (see Factsheet – Advance Statements)

Please call us to arrange an appointment to discuss how to achieve peace of mind and let us prepare your Advance Decision



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